



SEDGWICK COUNTY, KANSAS  
COMMUNICATIONS

# NEWS

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### SCHOOL IS OUT, SUMMER HAS ARRIVED WHAT ARE YOU TELLING YOUR KIDS?

(Sedgwick County, Kansas) – In this day and age, this time of year is anything but a vacation for many families. For some teens, thoughts of prom, final exams, and graduation are in the past and summer means celebrations with friends and summertime parties. Children and adolescents are faced with much more unstructured time and idleness, combined with a lack of adult supervision. This can be a toxic and potentially dangerous combination, especially if alcohol is involved.

The youth population in the United States is growing and as the number of teens increase, so will the challenges they face – including peer pressure to drink illegally. The sooner parents talk about respect for the law and avoiding the wrong kind of peer pressure, the better equipped their children will be to make smart choices.

In fact parents should begin talking with their children about drinking long before their teenage years. Many times teens think they have heard all they need to hear or think they know it all. But, parents can help them to make the right decisions when faced with peer pressure to drink illegally as teenagers. Here are some guidelines:

- Set a good example in your own use of alcohol beverages.
- Practice the basics of good parenting by encouraging open communication. This will foster self-esteem and critical decision-making skills.
- Be factual when you talk about drinking. The goal is to prepare children, not scare them.
- Set firm rules and guidelines.
- Get to know your children's friends and, if possible, their parents.

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In talking with your teenagers:

- Let them know that rules are made to protect them, not to punish them.
- Remind them to be in control and to base whatever decisions they make on what they know is right.
- Tell them that if they face a situation they know is not safe, to call you immediately, no matter the time or circumstance – and assure them that when they do call, they'll be praised for making the smart decision.

Dramatic reductions in underage drinking and drunk driving over the past twenty years indicate that community-based programs, partnerships, and personal responsibility messages are working. Parents, educators, retailers, law enforcement authorities and others are seeing signs that efforts to reduce the incidents of underage drinking and drunk driving are making a difference:

- 84% of adolescents (age 12-17) are not current drinkers.
- The percentage of high-school seniors who reported having a drink in the last 30 days is 13 percent lower in 2001, than in 1990, and down 29 percent since 1982.
- The number of people killed in teenage drunk-driving crashes has declined 38 percent since 1990 and 62 percent since 1982, going from 3,597 in 1982 to 1351 in 2000.
- There were 800 fewer teen drunk-driving fatalities in 2000 than there were in 1990, and 2,200 fewer teen drunk-driving fatalities in 2000 than in 1982.

Parents play a critical role in a child's development and self-esteem. Research has shown consistently that the two most important influences on a child's decisions about drinking are their parents and their peers.

If you feel your teen needs help, there are many Alcohol and Drug Treatment Centers in Sedgwick County. For assistance, contact COMCARE of Sedgwick County for information and referrals at 316-832-0852.

Source: Anheuser-Bush Companies, Inc.  
[Beerresponsible.com/progress](http://Beerresponsible.com/progress)

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